

193 Communicating the Dharma (International Chairmen's Event, Padmaloka 1999)

It did occur to me just a little while ago that it is quite a long time since I was last in Norfolk, in this very beautiful county, and quite a long time since I was at Padmaloka. In fact I don't really like to think just how long it has been since I saw this auspicious place last. But naturally very shortly after my arrival, in fact this morning or this afternoon I was looking around. Not just looking around Padmaloka itself but looking around, walking around the locality and just refreshing my memory of the place. Of course, looking around Padmaloka I saw all sorts of things, all sorts of improvements that had been made, in fact saw all sorts of improvements in the process of being made, and naturally I was happy, very happy to see those.

Again in the dining hall having lunch, I was just looking around at everybody present and the thought occurred to me that not so many years ago, there were not even so many Order Members in existence as we now have chairmen and chairwomen and that of course is quite a thought. I can remember the very first convention we ever had. There were twenty-seven of us altogether, assembled in the front room at Aryatara. Well you certainly couldn't get the Order into the front room at Aryatara or any of our communities any longer. We have grown, we have developed, and of course, we have been communicating the Dharma, all of us.

I must admit that some weeks ago, when the organisers of this Chairmen's conference or assembly, I'm not quite sure what to call it, but whatever it is, wrote to me inviting me to speak to you on, I believe it was 'Communicating the Dharma', or 'How to communicate the Dharma' I was a bit surprised because I thought 'well surely they know by this time?' Haven't they been doing it all these years? And haven't I, in any case, said quite a lot in one way or another on this question of communicating the Dharma? Well, Ratnaghosa has just been reminding me of things I have said to this very Order and I must admit I had not exactly forgotten those words, but they weren't, so as to say, very prominent in my memory. I was rather surprised at being asked to speak to you on this topic, and I couldn't help wondering whether in fact I had anything new to say. I suspect I don't in fact have anything new to say, I am probably going to say things that you have heard before so perhaps my talk will be more of the nature of a reminder rather than of the nature of imparting any fresh or new information.

In fact I quite early on decided that I wasn't going to give a talk, wasn't going to give a lecture at all. I was just going to write down, on a piece of paper, fifteen points, another of my fifteen points. I was going to write down fifteen points in connection with communicating the Dharma and read those to you, one by one and comment on each one in turn. Now not only that, not only was I rather surprised about being invited to speak on this well worn topic, but I also assumed, rightly or wrongly, that what I was being invited to do was speak on the subject of communicating the Dharma verbally, that is say through lectures, through talks. But of course that isn't the only way in which one can communicate the Dharma. One can communicate the Dharma in all sorts of other ways. One can communicate the Dharma through visual images, we communicate it, for instance, not just through the various Buddha and Bodhisattva figures represented in thankas and embodied in images but also in that symbol, that well known symbol, the Wheel of Life, and so on. So the Dharma can be communicated by visual means, it doesn't just have to be the original spoken word. Then again, as I believe has already been mentioned in the course of the week by one of the speakers, one communicates the Dharma through one's example. One certainly reinforces one's written or spoken word through one's living, personal example. And I remember, in this connection, that years and years ago, someone who had been on one of those famous old Battle retreats, a quite new person, told me that what had impressed them most on that retreat was not the talks, wonderful as they were, not the meditation, inspiring as they'd found it. What had impressed them most of all was the harmonious manner in which all the members of the team, Order Members and mitras

alike, had worked together, running that retreat. That had impressed them more than anything else. This person said that they'd never seen, ever before, people working together in that way. So surely the team was communicating the Dharma, just by running the retreat, conducting the retreat, organising the retreat together in such a harmonious manner, living and working, we may say, just like those famous Aniruddhas, about whom we sometimes do study. So the Dharma is not to be communicated just by the spoken word, not just by the written word. But that is what I am going to take this topic of communicating the Dharma to mean this evening. I don't know how long I am going to speak for, maybe fifteen minutes, maybe twenty minutes, maybe a bit longer, but in any case there will be time for questions, and those questions may cover the non-verbal if you wish, the non-verbal communication of the Dharma. They don't have to be confined to the verbal communication of the Dharma about which I shall be speaking.

So, point number one. Know your subject! This may seem to be very elementary, very obvious, and of course in a way it is. But what does one mean by knowing one's subject? It certainly doesn't mean just swotting it up for the purpose of the particular talk or lecture that you are going to be given, swotting up at the last minute. Sometimes people ask me how long it takes me to prepare a talk, and I sometimes say it takes several years, even a lifetime. So what did I mean by that? I'm reminded of a little anecdote from the biography of Whistler, James Whistler the painter. He was asked, in the course of a famous court case, when I think he sued Ruskin and was awarded a thousand in damages; he was asked how long it had taken him to paint a certain picture, for which he was asking £200, which was a lot of money in those days, still is for some of us. He said £200, it took me half an hour to paint that picture. So opposing counsel said, 'you mean you are asking £200, just for the work of half an hour?' 'No', he said, 'I'm asking it for the experience of a lifetime'. So the experience of a lifetime had gone into painting that picture even though the execution of it took him no more than half an hour. So, in much the same way, some of the talks I've given have grown out of reflections that I've been having, on and off admittedly, for many years in some cases. So it is not that I suddenly think of talking about this or talking about that, it is the culmination of a long process of reflection, and when reflections come to a certain point and when a certain opportunity offers, well then I give a talk, I give a lecture. So when I say that one should know your subject, it should be the product of study and reflection, perhaps of meditation, over quite a number of previous years.

I've spoken of knowing your subject, but afterwards it occurred to me that knowing was the wrong term. Perhaps it is not enough just to know your subject, whether it is the Eightfold Path you are speaking about or Buddhism and Western culture or whatever. It is also necessary to love your subject, I would even say that you should be in love with your subject and it is out of the abundance of that love that you just want to talk. And you all know, at least I suppose you do, that when you are in love you want to talk about it with someone, at least with your best friend. You want to tell them what you feel, how wonderful he is or how wonderful she is because you are just bursting with those emotions, you want to communicate them. Well you should feel the same way about the Dharma, about the Eightfold Path, about Buddhism and Western Culture, you should be so enamoured of the subject, as well as knowing about it. Of course when you are in love you don't necessarily know the other person, but here it is different so the analogy is not quite complete but you do see what I am getting at, it is not enough to know something about the subject you are talking about, but you must have feeling for it, you must have enthusiasm for it and be able to communicate that, not just information, not even just information derived simply from the scriptures, or even from Bhante's writings. So know your subject, love your subject, have been reflecting on the subject, mulling the subject over in your mind for some time so that the talk, or the lecture when you come to give it, is just the last stage, just the culmination of that particular process. So know your subject, love your subject. That's the first point.

Second point, which may seem to contradict the first one, in a way but really only superficially, prepare. Even though you know your subject, even though you love your subject, well don't be overconfident. Prepare well, look up references, make notes and don't rely on last minute inspiration. Even when you know the subject and love the subject, if you do rely on that last minute inspiration, you may find yourself at a loss for words and you may simply go rambling on and it will be obvious to everybody that you haven't prepared and that will be very sad and very disappointing. However well you know the subject, however well you love the subject, just sit down beforehand, give yourself sufficient time. Make notes, even write your talk out if you think it necessary, but do prepare. Give, one might say, the audience, and the subject, that degree of respect.

My third point is don't conceal your ignorance. One could also say, well, don't pretend that you know what you don't know, don't try to bluff your audience, audiences aren't stupid even though sometimes they might look that way. Don't think the audience is stupid, some members of the audience will be able to see through you, they'll be able to see through your bluff and they won't be impressed. So if there are certain things you don't know, well be clear about it, that you don't know them, certain incidental topics in the course of your talk, in the course of your lecture, make it clear that you are a bit tentative about this, or a bit tentative about that, or haven't fully gone into something else. And, of course, with regard to the talk as a whole, you should be sufficiently knowledgeable; you should be fully informed about it. Often, of course, people try to bluff for the same reason they rely, unwisely, on last minute inspiration, just because they haven't prepared very well, or not prepared, perhaps, in advance, at all. So don't try to pull the wool over the eyes of the people to whom you are speaking. My fourth point is - know your audience. If you are giving a talk at the Centre, you will usually know your audience, whether you are speaking to Order Members, or mitras, or people who have asked for ordination and you will adjust your talk accordingly, this is obvious. But if you go outside, if you are invited, say, to give a talk to some other Buddhist group or perhaps to classes in a school or college, or some social organisation, women's institute, or something of that sort, then try to find out something about them in advance. Whether they have had a Buddhist speaker before, whether they know anything about Buddhism, what is likely to be their level of information about Buddhism, what are likely to be the misunderstandings they have. So do a little research, especially when you go outside the confines of the Movement and are trying to communicate the Dharma to some quite different group of people, and naturally prepare and adjust your talk accordingly. This is quite important because if you don't do this you may prepare a talk that is quite beyond the understanding of the people that you are addressing, or it may fall well below their level of understanding and in both cases that will be disappointing.

But when you get in front of the audience you should really know them in another way, you should be aware of them, you should look at them. I think it is sometimes a good idea, that just before you start speaking, you just stand for a minute or two and you just look at your audience and you just take them in. Who's sitting there? What are they like? Old or young? Smart? Quiet looking..or otherwise? And just sort of get the feel of your audience. Are they attentive, or do they look a bit a dull or bored already? I think this is quite important, and if, of course, you look at your audience, your audience will be aware of you looking at them, or most of them will be, or some of them will be, and that will establish a sort of rapport between you and at least a portion of your audience. But what sometimes happens, is that people are a bit nervous, and they come up to the rostrum or the lectern and they don't even look at the audience, they just start off. Well that is not communication, that is not how to communicate the Dharma or anything else, you should be very aware of the people to whom you are speaking. You should be aware of them throughout the talk that you are giving. I think this is one of the disadvantages, and I must admit I've suffered from this myself, one of the disadvantages of when you read your talk. It is very difficult to keep sort of one eye on the audience and another eye down there on your notes or whatever. But at the very least, if you are reading your talk, if it's a fully prepared talk, at least

from time to time, lift up your head and look at your audience and then go back to your notes.

I once had the experience of seeing and hearing a very distinguished Buddhist, I won't mention any names, giving a talk to a very distinguished gathering, and he had his text here, and he was reading it, mumbling it actually, and never once looking at the audience. Actually what he had to say was quite important but it just didn't communicate, most people just didn't even hear it. This is many many years ago in India. So do bear this in mind, keep up as much eye contact with the audience as possible. Do be prepared to vary your talk a little, if you see signs of restlessness in your audience, well clearly you've got to get their attention again. Very often, of course, people being what they are, you get it with a story, or a joke. I am sure you all know this, though of course, it is not always easy to produce the right anecdote or the appropriate joke just when you happen to need it, but you ought to have, a stock of them up your sleeve for use in emergencies. So this is very important, this awareness of the audience, be on the look out for any sign of restlessness, or of people yawning, you know, putting their hand up to their mouth, or people leaving. Well this does happen in ordinary life, if its not just a talk or a lecture within the limits of the FWBO, where people are usually quite polite. If it's an ordinary public lecture, well people just get up and walk out, well I must admit, people have walked out from my lectures, in London, years and years ago. This was usually when I had something not very appreciative to say about Christianity, but yes people do sometimes walk out of lectures, so you have to notice this - 'ah, someone's walking out', and of course, you may know, you may realise the reason the reason why they've walked out. Well you may adjust your talk, if you think it necessary, accordingly.

So know your audience, be aware of your audience, keep in touch with your audience. You may think, incidentally, that it is not easy to keep in touch with a big audience, but I can assure you it is. You may think you can keep in touch with a small audience but not with a big one, but it is just as easy, if not easier to keep in touch with a big audience, that is if you go the right way about it. If there are thousands of them, you can't maintain eye contact with all of them, but when there's a very large gathering there's a sort of, I don't like to say, collective feeling, but some empathy between the audience which can be very useful and help with maintaining contact between you and the people to whom you are speaking.

Point number five - be genuine. Don't put on an act. Some people are born actors but that's not really the way to communicate the Dharma. Recently, as you probably know, I was in Germany and I happened to be visiting some of the disciples of Lama Govinda, especially Adryavajra (?) who, in a sense, is like the leader of the main Aryamandala group and they were talking about the different Western teachers who were or had been functioning in Germany, and I'm not going to mention any names, but they mentioned one who apparently, so we are told, on one occasion came onto the stage to give his talk still shaving. So it wasn't clear whether he just wanted to convey that he was such a busy man, giving so many lectures, so popular that he didn't even have time to shave before coming onto the stage or whether he just did it as a sort of gimmick. Well it sometimes works, sometimes attracts people's attention but I think one must be very very wary of putting on or trying to put on this sort of act. You know sometimes people do it in less obtrusive ways, sometimes people do it out of shyness or embarrassment, they are not able to be themselves. Of course I don't mean you should be yourself in this sort of current, what shall I say, 'alternative' sense, which usually means, not being yourself at all, but putting on some kind of act of 'being yourself' which usually means being sort of pseudo-spontaneous, and natural and with it and all the rest of it. So, be genuine, just be yourself in the real authentic sense, don't just act being yourself, don't try to put on some kind of act that will impress people, or draw people's attention. I think this is quite important. If there is any effort to be made in this direction, it is not trying to be yourself, but making effort to try not to try to be yourself, if you see what I mean. Just be yourself and it should be dead easy! But fairly often it isn't, well what is this self? That's a good question. I ask this question because

I'm taking a bit of work to the Convention, part of the work is a book that I have undertaken to review for The Times Higher Education Supplement and it is on 'the self'. It's a great thick volume, and it's an interdisciplinary study of 'the self', it's about twenty papers by twenty distinguished people from neurologists to theologians and so I've got to read it and think of something to say about it in 1500 words. So yes, 'the self' is not a simple subject perhaps after all, so perhaps when I say 'be yourself' you might say, 'well what self?' but that's another question altogether. But be genuine, don't put on an act and this is point number five.

And then, this may seem blindingly obvious but I make my point, because as I said before, we are probably going over well-worn territory, communicate the Dharma. When you are communicating the Dharma, you are communicating the Dharma, you are not communicating yourself, you are not communicating your own pet ideas and theories and you should not be concerned with communicating the Dharma in "my" way. Sometimes people think, 'well I've got my individual way of communicating the Dharma and I'm going to do it in my way'. There's a favourite slogan the advertisers use, 'lets do it your way', or 'you should be thinking in terms of doing it of my way', but that's not really the Dharmic attitude at all, you shouldn't think at all in terms of trying to put yourself across as a communicator of the Dharma. You, yourself, for better or for worse, will come across, you will make an impression. Of course the less impression you make, and the greater the impression the Dharma makes, the better. You should be transparent as it were, you should be a medium for the Dharma. So you shouldn't think too much about doing it in your particular way, you should just be concerned with communicating the Dharma, your mind should be on the Dharma, your heart should be with the Dharma, not on yourself, not on your particular special way, your individual way of communicating it. So that also is a very important point, point number six.

Then point number seven. Avoid fashionable terminology, avoid slang, don't try to be 'with it'. We all know how depressing these Church of England and even Catholic priests are who are doing their best to 'be with it', to keep up with the latest theme, to jump around with the young people to show that they are young at heart still, and who try to put the Gospel across in that way. Well apparently it just doesn't work, it isn't credible, it's not believable, so don't try to spice your communication of the Dharma with fashionable terminology, or even with wrong speech in any way. Don't use harsh, or (perhaps I shouldn't have to say this) indecent language in the course of your communication of the Dharma, whether you are communicating verbally or in writing. So don't try to be with it, don't try to show how up to date you are, how street wise you are or anything of that sort. Just think in terms of communicating the Dharma in a way that will be accessible to the people in front of you.

Point number eight. This may seem a quite minor point. Dress appropriately, dress appropriately. You can interpret this in all sorts of ways. You have to think of the situation into which you are going. Is it a Rotary Club? Is it a school? Is it another Buddhist group? Dress appropriately to the occasion. But however you dress, whether it is formally, or informally, for heaven's sake don't be sloppy. At least be clean and tidy. Even if you are going to address a convention of bike boys or whatever, at least be neat and tidy, you don't have to be like them to communicate with them. So dress appropriately for the occasion. I think, if someone is trying to communicate the Dharma and he looks sloppy and careless, well that communicates automatically the impression of unmindfulness, he doesn't care about himself, doesn't care about how he looks, doesn't care about the sort of impression he makes and that will of course subtly affect his or her communication of the Dharma. So give attention to your personal appearance, you don't have to sort of tart yourself up, I'm not talking about that sort of thing, but be presentable, in the true, the best, the appropriate sense.

And then, point number nine. Watch your movements, watch your gestures. I'm afraid I've seen, both live and on video, Order Members with their arms flailing around, in all sorts of ways. It looks really dreadful! And I've seen them twiddling with buttons

like this, and fiddling with pencils, and even fiddling with their kesa, and again, it looks dreadful. It suggests a lack of mindfulness. You're trying to communicate the Dharma and especially if you are talking about mindfulness and awareness and you yourself are plainly an example, an embodiment of the very opposite of that, it doesn't look good. It doesn't go down well, it doesn't convince people, it's not in keeping. I'm not saying you shouldn't gesture, gesture as you like, use the appropriate gesture, like this or like that but let it be aware, do it with intention, do it deliberately, don't let it just be happening, so that you just don't know what your arms or your legs or your head is doing while you are speaking. It creates a very negative impression, especially perhaps if you go and speak to some other Buddhist groups where mindfulness is emphasised and practised. I did hear that at least one Buddhist group had the impression that Members of the Western Buddhist Order were very unmindful. I suspect that that impression may have had some origin, that someone had been to speak to their group and had been quite unmindful with regard to his gestures or general demeanour.

And of course, if you make jokes, try not to laugh at your own jokes, well at least not immoderately, try not to cackle or anything of that sort. And watch your posture, don't try to be over casual, it's putting on an act, this sort of thing. I've known this happen, and then again it isn't really very impressive. I wouldn't advise you to talk walking up and down, some people do that sort of thing, well if they have done it in the past, I don't think it is very popular nowadays. So watch your gestures, watch your posture; even be aware of the tone of your voice. Sometimes your subject matter might make it more appropriate for you to speak loudly, softly, raise your voice, even lower it to a whisper, so just be aware of how you are speaking. There's a particular point about that a little later on. So just watch your gestures, it's a form of mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of the movements of the body.

And then, point ten. Don't talk down. If you talk down to your audience it means you haven't studied them, you haven't found out sufficient about them and you're not aware of them. So even if you are talking to an audience of children, be very careful you don't talk down to them. Talk to them directly. I can say something from my own experience about this, because as you know, years and years ago, I spent a lot of time among the nearly converted disciples of Dr Ambhedkar, the followers of Dr Ambhedkar. And I know that some of my fellow monks definitely did use to talk down to them, in the sense that they would only talk about the five precepts. They thought, well, these people aren't very well educated, in many cases they are illiterate so they just need the five precepts. But I didn't do that. I made a point, especially if I'd given one or two or three lectures in a particular place, of going into points of Buddhist philosophy. I used to talk about what is the Buddhist conception of nirvana? What do we mean by anata? Even *praticca samutpada*, I used to talk on these topics to people who were, in many cases, virtually illiterate, because I realised that intelligence has got very little to do with, in the last analysis, formal education. And if one puts things in the right way, if one is clear in one's own mind about these topics and one communicates clearly, even less educated people can understand. They can understand at least something, so one should never talk down to one's audience. Whatever the age of one's audience, whatever the education, never talk down. Of course you must, as I said earlier, be careful that you don't say things that go way above their heads. You can just say a few things perhaps, that are beyond their understanding, just to suggest you don't and they don't understand everything about Buddhism. But the bulk of what you say must be serious and intelligible to them and deal with fundamentals, and above all, not be a sort of talking down to them. So that's point number ten.

Point number eleven. Don't be apologetic. What do I mean by this? I mean, don't start off by saying, well, suppose you are going to talk about the Eightfold Path, don't say 'I don't really know very much about the Eightfold Path, I haven't studied it very much.' Well people might wonder why you are talking about it in that case. I sometimes wonder why people feel it necessary to be apologetic. It's a sort of false humility perhaps. You certainly shouldn't brag about your knowledge, and say, 'well I know all

about this subject and I am going to talk to you about it'. No. But you don't have to be apologetic in the sort of way I have described. Have confidence. You've studied the Dharma, you've studied that particular subject, you've reflected upon it, so you have confidence, you don't need to be apologetic. At the same time your presentation can be modest, modestly confident or confidently modest. So that's point number eleven. Twelve. Be aware of the occasion. Perhaps this applies more to talks or lectures given within the context of the FWBO. Suppose you have been asked to speak at a Wesak celebration. Well, bear in mind that it is a Wesak celebration. You should say something about Wesak, you should say something about the Buddha, about the Buddha's Enlightenment, its significance, not go off on some other, perhaps quite interesting spiel on some unrelated topic. And similarly, if you are attending somebody's funeral and you are invited to speak, speak something about that person, something appropriate to the occasion, something about impermanence, something about death. You might think this is obvious but I did hear not so very long ago that someone gave a talk at a Centre, I don't know which Centre it was, certainly not the LBC. After the talk, the Chairman or whoever it was should have given a vote of thanks, but the Chairman proceeded to talk about a topic with no connection whatever with the topic that the speaker had been speaking on, and there was a certain amount of surprise at this. So one must really watch this. Consider and study the occasion and speak appropriately to the occasion, in a tone appropriate to the occasion, with emotions appropriate to the occasion. In the case of Wesak, obviously you should be able to speak in a joyful way, if it's in connection with Parinirvana Day then a more serious and solemn tone is appropriate. If you are giving a little talk on the occasion of, say, the namegiving of somebody's baby, well be happy and joyful and celebratory because this new little being has come into the world and may grow up to be a good human being, perhaps even a Buddhist, even an Order Member. This is a joyful occasion. And similarly if it's someone's birthday party, you don't want to be the skeleton at the feast or anything like that, however appropriate meditation or skeletons may be on other occasions. So, be mindful of the occasion, I am sometimes surprised by the extent to which people are not mindful of the occasion and therefore do not speak appropriately.

Point thirteen – be systematic. By which I mean, have a structure. Let your talk have a definite beginning, middle and end. I'm not saying that the talk always necessarily has a very obvious structure. But it must be at least clear in your own mind. There must at least be an introductory bit, a substantial bit that is in the middle and then a sort of winding up at the end. It is like when you read a story, a well written story gives a certain sense of satisfaction, because it is complete, it's whole, it has a beginning, it has a middle and it has an end. Well of course, there are stories which are very, very cleverly written and don't follow that formula, but you need to be a genius to be able to pull that off. In the same way, it's possible to give a talk that doesn't have a definite structure, but at the same time is very satisfactory, but you need to be very, very experienced and something of a genius to be able to do that sort of thing so I wouldn't recommend it. I think the vast majority of you should be quite clear that your talk or your lecture should have a structure, should have a beginning, a middle and an end. If it doesn't have, even though you may be quite knowledgeable about the particular subject you're talking on, you may tend to ramble. You may ramble a lot because you have sort of lost the thread, and very often you will have lost the thread because you haven't got a structure. So, be systematic, have a structure, have a beginning, a middle and an end.

So that brings me to point number fourteen, which is don't be afraid of repeating yourself. There's a story which I'm sure I've told before, but I'm going to repeat it. It's about Winston Churchill, and it's said that Winston Churchill once said that when he gave a talk, when he gave a speech, wherever it was, he first of all told people what he was going to say. Then he told them what he had to say, then he told them what he had told them, because he was aware that people don't always take everything in. Their attention wanders, you can see it. I talked a little while ago about being aware of one's audience. With my experience I can just see it when someone's

thoughts are wandering, it's evident from their posture, from their expression and sometimes from the movement of their eyes, you can see their attention is wandering. So when their attention wanders they miss a part of your talk, they may miss great chunks of it, their thoughts may go wool gathering. They may miss more than they actually take in, so don't be afraid of repetition.

You don't have to repeat everything, but perhaps at the end there should be a little summary of the main points, the points that you want people to take away with them. And if it's a fairly long talk, and if it's a complex one containing a lot of material, well the chances are, that what people will take away with them, if they don't take away a recollection of a story, which very often happens, they will be most strongly impressed by, and take away with them, the last few things that you have said. And especially if you have given them a little warning that you are near the end of your talk so they start perking up and listening perhaps, knowing that it's going to come to an end soon. Well they are more attentive, so then you say point number one, point number two, point number three, these were my main points. So sometimes you need to do that, don't be afraid of repeating yourself.

But of course, when I say don't be afraid of repeating yourself, I mean don't be afraid of doing it intentionally, sometimes people repeat themselves like the old fashioned needle that got stuck in the old fashioned gramophone, saying the same few words or notes over and over again. They just get stuck, so because they can't think of what to say next, they go on repeating themselves. I remember some really quite painful experiences of this sort of thing from my experience in India, especially sometimes with the politicians. Because they didn't know anything about the Dharma usually, but sometimes they were chairing me, they would insist on chairing me, and I'd have something to say about the Dharma. I remember one man in particular, I think it was in Agra, I'd given a talk and he had to say something. So he said 'what we really need to do is to publish little books on Buddhism, little pamphlets, little pamphlets, publish little pamphlets on Buddhism, little pamphlets, we need to publish little pamphlets on Buddhism.' He just couldn't get further than this, and then he had to sit down. So I don't mean that sort of, you know, needle stuck in the record routine. Repeat yourself yes, but be aware, do it intentionally and with a certain purpose, let the repetitions have a definite place in the structure of your talk.

Then fifteenth and lastly, speak clearly. This is very important, don't mumble. Project your voice, this is very important, if you are relatively inexperienced, I suggest you station a friend at the back of the hall or wherever you are speaking and ask him to signal you in some way, if he can" hear you properly. Speak clearly, enunciate clearly, don't mumble and speak in such a way that the people can understand every word that you say. So you may have to iron out your pronunciation a bit, even your accent, but you should be prepared to do that, in the interests of communicating the Dharma effectively. You shouldn't be too concerned about the preserving your very own, individual way of speaking with your very own special accent and intonation. What you really want to do is concentrate on communicating the Dharma. That's what you are really standing up and speaking for the sake of. So, it may be necessary sometimes for people to take lessons in elocution. And while I am on the subject, just as spelling is important, it is also important to pronounce words correctly. Make sure you pronounce Sanskrit and Pali words clearly and distinctly because they may be unfamiliar to some people in the audience. And of course, obviously, you won't use too many Pali or Sanskrit words depending on the nature of your audience. But if you do employ them, then at least take the trouble to find out the correct pronunciation; and of course, the correct pronunciation of the words in your own language which you are using. And don't sort of drawl, or speak in an affected manner or anything of that sort.

So these are my fifteen points, which I am quite aware, cover to a great extent, ground that has already been trodden by me and perhaps by you, but anyway, I was asked to speak on the subject and that's what I've done. And, as I've said, if people do want to

ask questions about any of these points or about any aspect of non-verbal communication of the Dharma, then they may feel free to do so.